

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 IO-13 /069 W
-----120621Z 003474 /11

R 110330Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2646
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

CONFIDENTIAL KABUL 3284

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, AF, PK
SUBJ: AFGHAN FOREIGN MINISTRY VIEW OF SITUATION IN PAKISTAN

1. DURING A MAY 10 CALL BY EMBOFFS AND LEO J. MOSER, POLAD/CINCPAC, SAMAD GHAUS, DIRECTOR OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN (GOA) IS ESSENTIALLY "CONFUSED" ABOUT THE SITUATION IN PAKISTAN BECAUSE EVENTS THEMSELVES ARE SO UNPREDICTABLE. IN A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE VARIOUS SCENARIOS WHICH MIGHT COME TO PASS IN PAKISTAN, GHAUS SAID THAT IF BHUTTO SOMEHOW SURVIVES THIS CRISIS AND REMAINS IN POWER AT LEAST HE IS A KNOWN QUANTITY TO THE GOA, AND A MAN WHOSE "STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES ARE WELL KNOWN TO US". HE ADDED THAT BHUTTO IS A VERY ABLE AND CLEVER POLITICIAN, BUT THAT "A TERRIBLE WOUND" IN PAKISTAN'S BODY POLITIC WOULD CONTINUE TO HAUND BHUTTO SHOULD THE PM REMAIN IN OFFICE.

2. REGARDING A SECOND SCENARIO, A PNA VICTORY, GHAUS BRIEFLY COMMENTED THAT THE OPPOSITION
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DOES NOT YET SEEM TOO WELL ORGANIZED, NOR TOO CERTAIN OF ITS POLICIES, BUT THAT IT WAS HIS VIEW THAT GENERALLY SPEAKING THE PNA SEEMED "FAVORABLY DISPOSED" TOWARD AFGHANISTAN. HE SAID THAT UNDER EITHER CIRCUMSTANCE OF A CONTINUATION OF BHUTTO IN POWER OR A TAKE-OVER BY THE PNA, THE GOA HOPED TO BE ABLE TO CONTINUE

PROGRESS TOWARD PAK/AFGHAN RAPPROCHEMENT.

3. A MILITARY TAKE-OVER WAS GHAUS' THIRD SCENARIO, AND HE COMMENTED THAT "WE HAVE SEEN THE EXPERIENCE OF MILITARY RULE IN PAKISTAN" AND "SUCH A DEVELOPMENT WOULD BE BAD NEWS FOR US". IN THIS REGARD, HE ADDED THAT THE RESIDUE OF BITTERNESS CAUSED BY THE BEHAVIOR OF THE BASICALLY PUNJABI-STAFFED PAKISTAN ARMY RECENTLY IN KARACHI, AND EARLIER IN BALUCHISTAN, WOULD CERTAINLY PRESENT SERIOUS PROBLEMS FOR ANY MILITARY REGIME WHICH DECIDED TO SEIZE POWER.

4. IN CLOSING, GHAUS WAS CRITICAL OF BHUTTO'S ANTI-U.S. TACTICS, AND EXPRESSED SOME DISBELIEF THAT THE PM ACTUALLY BELIEVED WHAT HE HAD SAID.

5. COMMENT: GHAUS' REMARKS REPRESENT THE MOST SUCCINCT DESCRIPTION OF EVENTS IN PAKISTAN WHICH WE HAVE HEARD TO DATE FROM A HIGH LEVEL GOA OFFICIAL. IT SEEMS FAIRLY CLEAR TO US FROM HIS COMMENTS THAT THE GOA IS UNSURE AND WORRIED ABOUT WHAT IS HAPPENING IN PAKISTAN. GHAUS STATED SPECIFICALLY, AND THE WHOLE TENOR OF HIS REMARKS TENDED TO AMPLIFY THIS, THAT FOR THE TIME BEING THE GOA INTENDED TO CONTINUE TO ADOPT A CAREFUL, HANDS OFF POSTURE TOWARDS EVENTS IN PAKISTAN. END COMMENT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, POLITICAL STABILITY, POLITICAL SITUATION, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 11-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977KABUL03284
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770167-0178
Format: TEL
From: KABUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770571/aaaacjdp.tel
Line Count: 97
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 01c3ba96-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2572464
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AFGHAN FOREIGN MINISTRY VIEW OF SITUATION IN PAKISTAN
TAGS: PFOR, AF, PK
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/01c3ba96-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009